


Memorandum



Date: August 23, 2005

To: Honorable Joseph P. Farina
Chief Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager 

Subject: Law Library

As you are aware, funding for the Law Library was affected as a result of the implementation of Article V Revision 7 of the State Constitution. As a part of the FY 2004-05 Proposed Budget, I recommended including the Law Library as part of the Library Department budget. Staff worked over the past year developing different options in an attempt to address the funding issue, including having the Library Department assume the administrative support responsibilities for the Law Library and engaging a consultant to provide recommendations as to the most efficient and effective ways to provide quality law library resources. We were unable to engage a consultant and the administrative support functions were not transferred. The revenues made available to support the law library functions statewide did not perform as anticipated in the current fiscal year and we were forced to provide a general fund subsidy to the Law Library to continue services. While it was anticipated that the State Legislature would provide additional funding to the Law Library during this year's session, its actions provided no such relief. The source of funds identified in this year's glitch bill did not generate revenues to support law library functions in Miami-Dade County. Difficulties dealing with governance issues have also impeded any significant progress that could have been made towards achieving a plausible resolution.

However, given the recent changes at the Law Library we believe that a plan may be structured to continue operations. This year's Proposed Budget includes \$600,000 generated from a local option court cost authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. Subsequent to the release of the Proposed Budget, we have identified another \$160,000 available in the coming year to support law library operations. In our experience operating the Main Library, 5 regional libraries, 27 branch libraries, and seven mini-libraries we estimate that a library of slightly smaller size as that of the Law Library located in the Dade County Courthouse (7500 square feet vs. 9000 square feet) can be operated 8 hours a day for 5 days at approximately \$620,000. We will also have to consider options for the facility located at the Richard E. Gerstein Criminal Courthouse. While our estimates will allow you to continue to operate a Law Library facility within the current funding stream, the manner in which its materials are maintained will likely have to change and currently filled positions be reduced. The County will, however, work to find other employment opportunities for displaced personnel. We will also continue to identify other sources of funding to support this function, including approaching the legal associations and other entities who use the Law Library resources on a regular basis, as well as researching how other counties fund and operate their law libraries.

My staff and I look forward to working with you to ensure that this important function remains intact. Should you have any additional questions please contact Jennifer Glazer-Moon, Director of the Office of Strategic Business Management, at 305-375-5143.

c: Honorable Gill Freeman, Circuit Court Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit
Jennifer Glazer-Moon, Director, OSBM

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